



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Tips for farmers submitting soil samples

RALEIGH – The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' soil testing lab receives most of its samples from farmers in winter. During this time, it can take the laboratory longer to process samples. Even so, there are three steps growers can take to help make the process more efficient.

1. ***Package sample-information sheets in plastic bags to prevent moisture problems.*** Samples may sit in storage for days before they can be processed. If samples are damp, the information written on the sheet often smears and requires extra effort to read.

2. ***For farmers with large numbers of samples, use the soil lab's specially designed shipping cartons.*** Each carton can hold 36 soil sample boxes. Samples that are placed in the shipping carton in the order that they are listed on the soil information sheet can be organized and processed more quickly by the laboratory. For the shipping cartons to be most effective, growers must use them properly. Shipping cartons and instructions on how to pack them correctly are available from NCD&CS regional agronomists.

3. ***Address and label shipping cartons completely and correctly.*** The NCD&CS Agronomic Services Division has three laboratories located in one building. Only soil samples should be addressed to the NCD&CS Soil Testing Laboratory. If several cartons of soil samples are being sent at the same time, the cartons should be labeled to indicate the number of cartons in the set: for example, Box 1 of 3; Box 2 of 3; Box 3 of 3. If soil samples are for problem diagnosis or heavy metal analysis, that also should be indicated prominently on the outside of the shipping carton. In these special cases, also be sure to fill out the correct soil sample information sheet.

The NCD&CS Soil Testing Laboratory is using a new state agency mail delivery system. If packages are being sent to the lab through the U.S. Postal Service, they should be addressed as follows:

NCD&CS SOIL TESTING LABORATORY
1040 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH NC 27699-1040

If the packages are being sent to the lab by UPS or Federal Express, they should be addressed to the physical address:

NCD&CS SOIL TESTING LABORATORY
4300 REEDY CREEK RD
RALEIGH NC 27607-6465

For more information about collecting or submitting samples, or interpreting soil test reports, contact your area NCD&CS regional agronomist. Call Kent Messick at (919) 733-2655, or visit www.ncagr.com/agronomi/rahome.htm for contact information for your regional agronomist.